



Equalities Gathering Education



This project is part funded by the EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund. Making management of migration flows more efficient across the European Union.

Section 1 Event Details



Event Title	Equalities Gathering – Education
Event organised by	Equalities Integration Officer
Event Venue	Calton Heritage Learning Centre, Glasgow
Event Date	Saturday 5th October 2019
Event Start – End times	10.00 – 3.30pm



Section 2 Event Agenda

Time	Activity	Outcome
9.00 – 10.00 1 hour	Set up	Signs for outside Reg table, ready Refreshments ready Table discussion materials ready Equalities Mon. Box ready
10.00 – 10.30 30 mins	Registration	Welcome folk. People know how crèche works People allocated interpreters Photo permissions info rcvd People get info on NS in own languages & EMon. form
10.30 – 10.40 10 mins	Welcome/ Housekeeping/ Intro – TF (community rep) What the Equalities Gatherings are Aims of Equalities Gatherings Good and safe communication today	People informed about whole project People informed about Aims People aware of conduct and values
10.40 – 10.50 10 mins	Presentation – J.J (refugee working group rep)	People learn about working group's responses on health and wellbeing and are inspired for following conversations
10.50 – 11.05 10 mins + 5 mins set up	Presentation – New Scots	People understand key NS actions on Employment and Welfare
11.10 – 11.20 10 mins	Instructions for table groups Time for people to move to tables	People hopefully seated OK!
11.20 – 1.00 1 hour 40 50 mins – 1 obj 50 mins – 2nd obj	Discussion 4 tables Could change depending on numbers/ interest of themes	People get their views about employability & welfare heard and recorded People make recommendations/respond to New Scots
1.00 – 2.00 1 hour	LUNCH + Collation of small group discussions – prep key points on Powerpoint + Services reps prepare their info & set up	Summary of feedback ready for 2pm Services rep clear on role
2.00 – 2.10 10 mins	Summary Key points raised from AM discussions	People understand key points People know that New Scots will take points and feed back at a future event

Section 2

Event Agenda continued

Time	Activity	Outcome
2.10 – 3.10pm 1 hour	Services information discussions Input from agency for 20 mins, move round 3 times GDA, Bridges, SRC	People informed about purpose of various education and equalities services People know how to access them/know how to help others access them
3.10 – 3.30pm 20 mins	Evaluation Graffiti walls questions on each aim on flipchart – invite comments Verbal evaluation	Data gathered on how well event met aims
3.30 – 4pm 30 mins	Tidy Up	People informed about whole project People informed about Aims People aware of conduct and values

Section 3

Attendees

Total number of attendees

46 (32 refugee community members)

Identify organisations attending in an official capacity

- Scottish Refugee Council
- Glasgow Disability Alliance
- Scottish Government
- Bridges Programme
- Strathclyde University

Identify 'groups' contributing to the event

Two independent childminders, caterers, Thenu Housing venue

Identify refugee groups from geographic areas

Glasgow

“All the topics were really good because people give many ideas and advice especially on getting into the colleges and getting employment.”

Section 4

Event Reporting

At registration: copies of the following were handed to attendees: New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy summary available in different languages; 'easy read' versions we had created of Employability & Welfare objectives; copies of the guidelines for communicating at the event in English, French and Arabic (translations by refugee working group members), agendas.

The Equalities Gathering on Education aimed to:

- Bring together refugee representatives to identify and analyse their collective issues and priorities for change for health and well-being.
- Bring together refugees and other third sector/ community organisations to learn from each other's experiences and explore possibilities for working together.
- Enable equalities groups to meet and get to know policy makers and service providers involved the New Scots Integration Strategy.

Summary of the outcomes decided by the refugee working group (members all represent one or more equality group) who co-designed the format and agenda for the Gatherings:

- Learn what New Scots Strategy is and what it is doing.
- Speak up and get my opinions heard and understood.
- Meet people and make new connections.
- Get useful information and services.
- Feel welcomed and respected.

The Equalities Integration Officer opened the event. She gave housekeeping information, presented the background to the Equalities Gatherings project, explained the purpose of the event and presented the guidelines for communicating positively and safely that the working group had developed.

J.J. from the refugee working group then gave a presentation of the 'education journey' artwork the group had decided to create to tell the stories of their experiences of education in Scotland.

J.J. listed some main themes participants had discussed (widening access to scholarships, getting confidence to approach institutions, clearer guidance on rights and how to apply). J.J. then told her own story as a young person navigating college and further education.

I McL from the University of Strathclyde, and member of the New Scots Education thematic group, provided an overview of the progress of the Education objectives.

The refugee working group had previously decided to organise discussion tables by the following themes: 1) Schools; 2) College; 3) University; 4) Education in the community. Attendees went to the themed table of their choice. SRC staff facilitators took objectives in turn and asked discussion groups to select up to two of the Education objectives that interested them the most to discuss:

1. Are these the right actions? If not, why not?
2. Advice you would give New Scots;
3. Questions/comments.

After lunch, the Equalities Integration Officer and one of the Regional Integration Coordinators presented a summary of the key views and recommendations. Following this, The Bridges Programme, Glasgow Disability Alliance and Scottish Refugee Council's CEO set up information sessions on their work. Participants moved freely between them for information and discussion.

Section 5

Key messages/outcomes

Schools

All discussion group participants (mothers of primary and secondary school age children) prioritised objective one and said it was relevant to many of their experiences:

- Compare different approaches that Scottish schools take to providing guidance to refugee parents and their children about the school system, especially advice given to asylum seeking children about further and higher education rights. Implementing good practices across all schools will help children make informed academic choices and help mothers support them better. Everyone must have access to good guidance – it should not be a postcode lottery.
- Invest in good training and support practice that helps teachers understand refugee women’s perspective in particular (as we are usually the main carers) so that parents and teachers can build good relationships. Be mindful of making assumptions about what we do or do not understand. Be aware that some subjects and structures do not exist in our home countries. Learn about culture and education systems in our home countries so that teachers understand how children’s backgrounds inform their learning.
- Remove all barriers to academic and extracurricular activity caused by poverty and ensure that teachers understand how refugees’ experiences of poverty affects how children learn and how parents engage with schools. This will reduce the stigma children experience among their peers, improve children’s confidence, health and future prospects.
- Work with other Scottish Government strategies, e.g. the Child Poverty Action Plan to help progress action to stop poverty being a barrier to education for refugee children.

Further Education

Two college-themed groups discussed all Education objectives.

- Recognise barriers that can hinder refugees and asylum seeker students’ progress at college and work together positively with students to overcome them. Improve college childcare provision (refugee women often do not have support networks) and address ESOL waiting lists issues in Glasgow.
- Allow asylum seekers full time options and open apprenticeships. This would make a big difference to young people who lag behind peers in education because they cannot study full time. This would increase the confidence of LGBT and disabled people who feel stigmatised or isolated.
- We need friendlier front desk staff to help people take their first step to approach colleges. Provide interpreting options or display multilingual information with welcoming messages (including LGBT welcome information) at front desk spaces. This can help students with little English feel more confident and could make a big difference to younger people who feel like they are not taken seriously, and LGBT people who can be wary of accessing new services if there is no guarantee they are safe.
- Ensure that providers give clear and accurate information about further education rights and entitlements. This prevents young people especially from receiving misleading advice that they are not empowered to challenge. Other equalities groups recommend that students receive more information about how qualifications from home countries are assessed.

Higher Education

Group was comprised of women, LGBT and younger people. They discussed objectives one and three then agreed on several shared recommendations:

- Recognising qualifications from people’s home countries is a priority. Funding should be available for refugees and asylum seekers to get their qualifications translated
- Commit to reducing the barriers to asylum seekers accessing higher education. Asylum seekers should be entitled to access tuition fees and living costs support. Consider developing academic courses that are specifically available to refugees and asylum seekers so that they can engage with universities and students on some level to help their integration if they cannot access other courses

- Engage further with refugee communities to learn and understand people’s experiences of institutional racism at universities.
- Hold an information fair for refugees and asylum seekers where people can access all the universities in their region to receive advice and guidance specific to their needs.
- Provide clearer information and guidance for applying for refugee scholarships and access to English classes to ensure that applicants submit good quality applications on time.
- Provide access to university mental health services whose staff are trained in refugee issues and the experiences of refugees from equalities groups.

“Remove all barriers to academic and extracurricular activity caused by poverty and ensure that teachers understand how refugees’ experiences of poverty affects how children learn and how parents engage with schools.”

“Allow asylum seekers full time options [to further education] and open apprenticeships. This would increase the confidence of LGBT and disabled people who feel stigmatised or isolated.”

Section 6

Event evaluation

Staff and volunteer debriefs

What went well?

- Increased number of people of different nationalities (observed, not recorded, as do not gather data from people about nationalities).
- Good speech by community representative – story about challenge then progress that people could relate to.
- Interest in and discussion of artwork.
- New ideas and recommendations particularly for schools and universities. Asking people to discuss just one area of interest (school, college, uni) helped us gauge which areas people saw as the most important and gave time for more analytical conversation and recommendations.
- Positive reception to the New Scots rep speech.
- People engaged a lot at the info inputs in the afternoon.

What did not go well/what could be done differently?

Low attendance still by agencies and New Scots reps despite over six weeks' notice.

- Need to explore other reasons of agencies for not engaging, other than timing issues. Need to restrict event days to Saturdays as this suits community members who have weekday commitments.

Late arrival of most attendees due to traffic issues in the area. This affected the discussion group timings.

- Have more staff and more space at the back to manage latecomers and minimise disruption.

Asking attendees to indicate which two themes they were interested in then later trying to use the 'pre-booked' lists to allocate everyone to the right table was too disruptive as some people arrived late and had not chosen themes, and the session was running late, so people only had time to discuss one of their chosen themes.

- Do not organise lists in advance, ask people to choose table when the exercise starts to avoid delays and confusion.

Not enough interpreters as more people attended than had registered for a language that was previously not in demand at all.

- Send more interpreter reminders and be more proactive to check needs with people who register but don't indicate the demand for an interpreter.

Childcare demand much higher than before – needed to create a separate table for older children in main room to free up crèche room, which meant mothers had to keep an eye on their kids, and the noise level was higher.

- Book out room upstairs for older kids and hire extra childcare

Refugee working group debrief

What went well?

- We notice that by the time of this event we have been growing in confidence to articulate our experiences – and help others to share theirs
- It was good preparing the artwork to show everyone and have people admire it. Creating the artwork helped give me an overall picture of all my thoughts.

What did not go well/what could be done differently?

- Need more representatives from agencies, and maybe some from politics.
- Not clear how many younger people are being represented – need to go out and meet them in their own places instead.
- Interpreters are noisy – ask them to sit at the back where possible

Section 7

Attendee Evaluation

We did not use the target evaluation this time (as per recommendation in Equalities Gathering 2 report). We used more targeted questions to try to elicit more specific comments in the feedback.

What did you like? Why?

“Good meeting. I am hoping that my concerns are heard and a change to take place. I hope to have more group sessions like this.”

“It was a good session. I learned and gained knowledge. It made me feel good to share my concerns”

“All the topics were really good because people give many ideas and advice especially on getting into the colleges and getting employment”

“Educative, informative, well-co-ordinated, welcoming”

“The discussion was very interesting and information. Also enjoyed x's talk, very informative [New Scots input]”

“Interaction, clarity, team discussion”

What I like: all the topics were good, place was accessible, school, college & university – the topics well explained

“Well organised I loved: discussion, meeting organisations, the food was yummy”

What was the most useful/interesting part of the day?

“Group discussion, report of the discussion”

“Tables discussions and presentations”

“Qualification point [recognition of qualifications] – who can provide it”

What did you not like? Why?

“Food”

“Kids' table was in the same place where the discussions and presentations took place”

What do we need to do to make these events better?

“Very informative workshop. I think more open debates on Education for Asylum seekers/refugee and more engagement needed”

“Need a suitable place for kids to enjoy their time without disturbing the event.”

“Women and disabled people in particular recommend that New Scots review existing written information on health rights and services to make it more accessible.”

Section 6

Actual Expenditure

Please detail actual expenditure against the budget you produced for the event and highlight any discrepancies.

	Estimated cost	Actual cost
Event: Venue	£300.00	£224.00
Event: Refugee travel	£135.00	£205.80
Event: Catering	£400.00	£420.00
Event: Interpreters	£200.00	£651.50
Event: Childcare	£120.00	£100.00
Refugee prep workshops: Catering	£266.00	£117.00
Refugee prep workshops: Childcare	£90.00	0
Refugee prep workshops: Travel	£184.00	£215.83
Materials/stationery	0	£15.17
Staff travel	0	£42.43
TOTAL		£1661.79



Scottish Refugee Council
(Glasgow – Main Office)
6th Floor, Portland House
17 Renfield Street
Glasgow, G2 5AH
0141 248 9799

Scottish Refugee Council
(Dundee)
10 Constitution Road
Dundee, DD1 1LL
01382 797881

www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk

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SCOTTISH FAITHS
ACTION FOR REFUGEES